1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

614 informants now advanced in years, it cannot be the result of a breakdown of the native system due to the influence of white contact.
582 It is considered to be in order if the two parties to such a marriage belong to different villages, as is usually the case, since the custom is for the mate to be sought outside the village. But it occasionally happens that two people of the same clan marry even if they live in the same village, provided they do not belong to any of the prohibited relationships. It is clear that the tie of blood is considered more important than the clan, since the prohibited relationships are not confined to clansmen, as will be shown in a subsequent paragraph.

614 The children belong to the clan of their mother. To this rule
● [611] there is no exception, in the ordinary course of affairs. But if
597 a clan is greatly diminished in numbers it may adopt an infant of another clan, with the consent of the clan to which the individual belongs by right of birth. For example, if a Nakanb woman has a child, and the Naboin people wish to adopt it, a man of importance of the Naboin clan makes a feast and gives the child its name. It is then said to belong to the Naboin clan, and can use the Naboin decoration, and, if a boy, frequents the men's house belonging to the Naboin people. The members of his new clan are expected to provide for him in future, and though his mother may continue, if she so desire, to give him food beyond the time of suckling, she is in no way bound to do so. She must not continue to care for him
[613] otherwise; this is the duty of the adopting clan, and would be undertaken by the women belonging to the lineage of the man who arranged the transaction and gave the child its name. For example,
[164] if the child has yaws, or one of the tropical sores no one ever escapes, the people of his original clan must not tend or wash him, but this must be done by the adopting clan. The adopting clan must also find the wherewithal to provide him with a wife. If a female child is thus adopted, the adopting clan must arrange the marriage. The currency provided by the husband's people is paid to them, but the clan into which she was born is given a little of it, the amount being arranged by mutual consent. When the time comes to make the feast which reciprocates the payment, the clan to which she originally belonged helps the clan which took her over. The adopting clan provides for the marriage of her children, but such children may, if they please, revert to their mother's original clan. Thus Tatum, the mother of Matare, was born into the

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

lived, the same kind of life as commoners, observing the same taboos, working at the same tasks, eating the same food, and living in the same kind of huts. To this last statement there is one exception. The hut in which lives the chief wife of the head of the *tsunaun* lineage, who is usually herself *tsunaun*, has an extension in front of it, roofed, and walled at the sides but open in front, and provided with the usual platform. This is called the 'eye' of the house. Here is kept the slit-gong belonging to the *tsunaun*, which is beaten on ceremonial occasions as well as for dances. Here the older men of the village will sometimes congregate to talk, while the boys and younger men use the front of the men's house for that purpose. Except on certain ceremonial occasions, women are not allowed there, as it is only an extension of the *tagoan*, or men's verandah, of the ordinary houses. This extension makes the house the longest in the village. Its interior is no different from that of other houses. The houses occupied by other members of the *tsunaun* lineage do not differ at all, either inside or out, from those of commoners. There is no distinctive dress or attached ornament peculiar to *tsunaun*, but some of the cicatrized patterns may not be cut upon commoners.

So far as I can ascertain, the prestige of a *tsunaun* was never directly a matter of the possession of property. He is not expected to give large feasts at his own expense. If the group is concerned in an important ceremony, for which much food must be provided, he will contribute as much as possible, but the others must bring their own contributions as well. He does, as a rule, own more strings of ceremonial currency than most people can boast of, either handed down on the death of former *tsunaun* or received as payment for favours shown. But he needs more than a commoner to provide for the marriage payments of the young men of his lineage, who, being themselves *tsunaun*, should marry women equal to them in position.

A *tsunaun* usually has several wives, but that is not in itself a sign of rank, since commoners may also have as many as they wish and can provide for. He will, however, usually be betrothed to at least two while still a mere boy, whereas the commoner is probably betrothed in youth to one only, pleasing himself as to any subsequent marriages. It is usual for the first wife of a man who is *tsunaun* to be herself *tsunaun*, belonging to another village, and usually to another clan. His other wives may, if he so desires, be

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

565 commoners, but in that case their children are not *tsunaun*, and
595 there is no possibility of their acquiring that status either by
611 courtesy or by reason of any ceremonial procedure or by payment. Children by a woman who is *tsunaun* in her own right in another village are given their full meed of honour in that village, even though they may live with their father's people. They receive a measure of recognition in their father's village, but cannot succeed to the headship there. To illustrate by a concrete case: Rus, Pinari's chief wife, to whom he had been betrothed in childhood, was the sister of the *tsunaun* of the village of Ieta, on the southern coast of Buka, across Buka Passage. She had an elder sister, Kiots, whose son, Gerwan, was the next in succession at Ieta, but after his death, Wasē, son of Rus and Pinari, would be *tsunaun* at Ieta. Owing, as Pinari said, to his fear of 'poison', and as other people said, to pressure from his father, who was anxious to keep him among his followers, Wasē decided, on the death of his mother's elder brother, with whom he had been staying, to return and take up his residence at Kurtatchi. Here he was treated with respect as the son of Pinari, but it was explained to me that he was only 'half-*tsunaun*' in that village, and was definitely inferior in position to Kakari, Pinari's 'sister's' son. Pinari pushed him to the fore as much as he could, and did his best to play him against Kakari, whom he covertly disliked. Actually Wasē took quite a prominent part in the affairs of the village, and was to share with Kakari the responsibility for organizing the *watawutʃ* ceremony under Pinari's tuition.

565 A woman who is *tsunaun* may marry a commoner if she likes
582 him, and if he can produce the necessary large amount of cere-
611 monial currency. The children of such a marriage are *tsunaun*; the fact that their father was a commoner makes no difference at all.

565 Although it may easily happen that a *tsunaun* is possessed of
754 special knowledge of some particular kind of magic, this is inci-
789 dental to his position and not essentially connected with it. Magical knowledge is just as often the property of commoners. Sobak, one of the rain-makers of Kurtatchi, is a commoner. Pinari, the *tsunaun tʃan*, took the principal part at the ceremony for planting a new taro garden described in Chapter IX, but at a precisely comparable ceremony performed for a taro garden belonging to Tabut, that role was filled by a commoner. Examples might be multiplied. But those who are *tsunaun* are regarded as specially

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

of a married couple is of more importance than the other, the spouse will take up residence in the village of the partner who has the higher status. In any case, the kindred, as defined above, counts for more than the clan. 612 613 591

The recognized social unit is the lineage, its head is the eldest living male, hence it follows that the person to whom an individual looks as the one officially in authority over him is his mother's eldest living brother. Some lineage groups take precedence of the rest; their members are known as *tsunaun*, and the head of such a group is a person of great authority, though now possessing less than in the olden days. 565 604 613

For the reckoning of descent and succession the mother's side of the house is all-important, the father's side completely ignored, i.e. the community is in this respect exclusively matrilineal. But in the case of inheritance of personal property, either in goods or in knowledge, the society is both matrilineal and patrilineal, that is to say, a man can bequeath such property to his son or to his sister's son, or divide it between them, as he pleases. 428 611

Throughout the area there are two main clans, but others, smaller in numbers, though not considered as subdivisions, occur: the names and number of these small clans differ in different districts. With each clan is associated some creature, usually, but not always, a bird, but the association now amounts to little more than that of name, though it may once have been more important. The significance of the clan as a social unit seems to have declined considerably with the abolition of warfare. 614 [721]

Marriage is normally exogamous, but exceptions to this rule seem always to have occurred not infrequently. The important thing is to avoid persons with whom direct relationship can be traced either through the mother or through the father, marriages between cousins and the children of cousins being strongly taboo. (This applies to both parallel and cross-cousins.) The bride is preferably obtained from another village. 582

The relationship system is a 'classificatory' one, comparable with those found in other parts of Melanesia, with strong taboos regulating social intercourse between certain persons. The most important of these are their regulations applying to the wife's mother–daughter's husband relationship, and to that between the parents of husband and the parents of wife. These restrictions are lifted under certain circumstances. 601 606